

(Johnstone and Storr 1998, K. Creed, pers. comm.). In recent years Buff-banded Rail have been regularly observed (23% of visits in 2001, and 17% of the 2002 surveys, K. Creed unpub. data), and, on occasion, small parties of birds, including individuals that were thought to be immature, have been noted (3, 21/11/2001; 4, 06/01/2002; 3, 10/02/2003; K. Creed unpub. data). Given the apparent increase in Buff-banded Rail abundance on the Swan Coastal Plain in recent years, it is not surprising that there is now proof of their breeding at Pelican Point.

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— WESLEY J. BANCROFT,
School of Animal Biology, M092,
University of Western Australia,
35 Stirling Highway Crawley
WA 6009

Predation of Loggerhead turtle hatchlings by the Boodie (*Bettongia lesueur*) on Dorre Island, Western Australia - The Boodie is a nocturnal and gregarious macropod that inhabits burrows of its own construction. It is omnivorous, feeding on invertebrates, seeds, fungi, fruit, nuts, and carrion (Burbidge 1996, Robley *et al.* 2001). At the time of European settlement the Boodie was wide spread across the southern two thirds of Australia, but is now confined to four islands off the Western Australian Coast (Short and Turner 1999, Morris 2002).

During a visit to the northern end of Dorre Is (60km west of Carnarvon, WA) in March 2003, it was observed that over 20 Loggerhead Turtle (*Caretta caretta*) nests had been dug up and the emerging hatchlings taken within the previous 24 to 48 hours. Fresh Boodie tracks were found in and around the nests. Boodies had excavated an area approximately 1m across and had dug down 450 to 500mm to expose the nesting chamber and the egg shells of the emerging hatchlings. Loggerhead Turtles are the most threatened turtle in WA waters.

It was noted that there had been a significant predation of the hatchlings as there were few hatchling tracks leaving the nest; in most cases less than six sets of tracks were observed. It would be expected that significantly more hatchlings than this would leave a nest: on Dirk Hartog Island the average number of eggs per clutch is 141 (Prince 2000). It appears that the predation was opportunistic

and coincided with the emerging of the hatchlings. All the Boodie excavations were centred above the nesting chambers and it appears that they were targeting the hatchlings as they emerged, although it is possible that they may also take the eggs there was no evidence of this.

Live Loggerhead Turtle hatchlings were found just below the surface of one exposed nest and it would be likely that high daytime temperatures would have killed these hatchlings. These observations indicate the Boodie on Dorre Island is potentially a significant cause of mortality of turtle hatchlings on the island. Recent Water Rat (*Hydromys chrysogaster*) tracks were also found in the area but it is uncertain whether they are taking the hatchlings. Western Barred Bandicoots (*Perameles bougainville*) also occur on the island, but it is unlikely this species would be capable of taking hatchlings; however, on Barrow Island it has been recorded that the Golden Bandicoot (*Isoodon auratus*) is capable of taking the eggs of Green Turtles (Morris 1987). There is no evidence that Boodies on Barrow Island take turtle hatchlings (Burbidge pers. comm.). It would appear, from the number of disturbed nests that Dorre Is may be a significant Loggerhead Turtle rookery and the site and impact of Boodie predation of the hatchlings warrants further investigation.

Bettong *Bettongia lesueur*, In: *The Mammals of Australia* ed. by R Strahan pp 289 – 201.

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– N.D. THOMAS, Department of Conservation and Land Management. PO Box 51 Wanneroo 6946.

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